

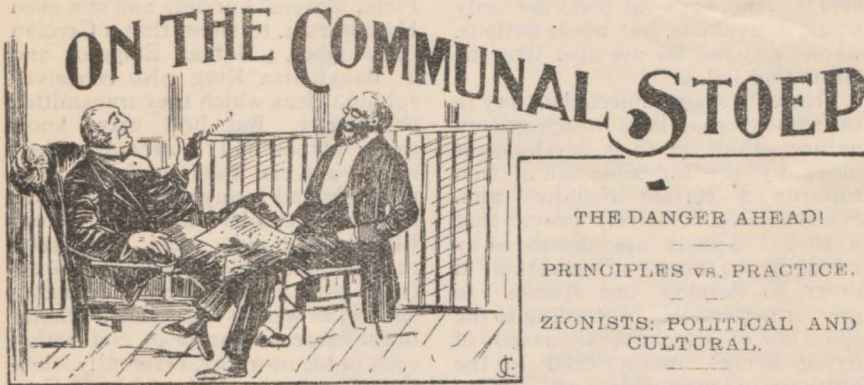
faith are members of an orthodox, and how many of a reform congregation. That they are not all reform we know from a recent case in Pressburg, which was that of a teacher in the orthodox congregation in Pressburg. The actress who married the aged poet Jokai was also the daughter of a strictly orthodox family. The first rabbi, who officiated at such marriages, however, was the late Rabbi Rosenberg of Arad, the pioneer reform congregation of Hungary.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"CICERO."—The 15th of Adar corresponded with February 22nd in 1883.

"INQUISITIVE."—We are afraid we cannot satisfy your curiosity in this particular matter. There have been in the past so many slips betwixt the cup and the lip that it is advisable to wait till the six months lapse.

Zionist, but also to Jews in other parts of the world. That, however, is all the more reason that it should be commented upon. This division has made it necessary for Zionists to be distinguished as "Political" and "Culture" Zionists. Surely, it does not do the movement any good for such divisions and distinctions to exist within it. There are enough anti-Zionist forces *without* the movement to fight against and the consummation of the Zionist ideal is in all conscience difficult enough without these internal dissensions in a movement which ought to stand out to the world of Jewry as a mighty example of how an ideal and a principle can weld together Jews of all parts of the world, of the most diverse thought and upbringing, into one harmonious whole, and bring about action and work that have in them the seed of realisation and consummation of that ideal and principle.



In the course of my observations on various communal matters that concern local Jewry, I have noticed a trait of communal character that may not be peculiar to Johannesburg or South African Jewry but which at the same time is perhaps more noticeable in this than in the average Jewish community. However people and sections in the community may differ in communal matters, however bitter one party may be against the other in practical communal politics, and however divided they may be on subjects that closely concern the welfare of the community and Jewry at large and that have a practical influence on the workings of our communal activities, yet idealistically, in theory and in principles, so long as they are idealistically talked about, we are all one, united in perfect harmony, which, in itself, is ideally beautiful. Thus, in the twenty odd years that disunion in congregational matters, has been among us, all sections agreed in worshipping the ideal of union and everybody was of opinion that the consummation of union would be a fine thing for the community. They agreed in worshipping it as an ideal, in affirming it as a principle, but that is all.

off as ever, indeed more so, for as a result of those efforts by reason of the bitter feelings they aroused in the community they not only did not bring about union but they made the consummation further off than ever and more distantly an ideal than it ever had been. An illustration of this communal trait of character was furnished less than a year ago when the principle of amalgamation was affirmed, but the practical propositions to put the affirmation into effect were defeated.

Apart from congregational matters, I have also noticed this trait in other activities carried on in this community. In our charitable work ideals and principles are expressed and affirmed but nothing further. They are expressed or affirmed, but no action is taken, nothing is done to bring them into practical use, and make them into a real, active, working, living force in the community.

It has been affirmed over and over again that political and cultural work in Zionism can go together, and that in fact it is best that they do go together. For the life of me I do not see why political and cultural work in the Zionist movement cannot go along peacefully side by side in the same ranks. But what do we find in actual practice and when we go among the Zionist leaders and the rank and file of the movement? We see two opposing ranks, the political on one side and what is termed the "practical" and cultural on the other side. This however is not only a fact that refers to local Jewry or to that section of it that is

Yet this sharp division between the cultural and political among Zionists exists, and more so is being made sharper and keener as time goes on. Right through the Zionist army, from the leaders to the most obscure private, there is the division, and if matters do not improve in this direction, things will soon come to such a pass that this division will take shape and form in the establishment of two distinct camps in the Zionist movement, which will be more or less antagonistic.

Such a catastrophe, which all thinking and observant Zionists must see is staring the movement in the face cannot be easily exaggerated. It should be superfluous to urge that something should be done to remove this catastrophe from the path of Zionism, for that should be obvious to all that care the least for the progress of the Zionist ideal. To see a catastrophe coming along and not to do anything to prevent its occurrence or to remove it out of the path, or to get it out of its road, is inconceivable on the part of any sentient being, and yet in the Zionist Movement this danger is seen to be threatening and nothing seems to be done to remove it.

According to what I see, it is almost already being accepted as the inevitable, and if this is so then I am afraid Zionism is about to see troublous times. At the same time, I cannot conceive the leaders of the National Movement seeing this danger threatening and not taking any steps to safeguard the movement therefrom. Zionism requires all the energies and help it can muster on its behalf throughout the world, South Africa as well as anywhere else, and it cer-

tainly cannot afford to waste any of it in internal dissensions of so serious a nature as that existing between the political and cultural sections of the movement. It is all the more necessary for Zionists now than ever to rally round the flag of the Jewish nation in serried ranks, permeated with one object, one ideal, the attainment of that for which the Jews have been striving and praying for thousands of years. "Cultural," "political," "Biblical," and all other Zionists must work together to obtain this one object this consummation of the Jewish ideal, and unless all sections drop their differences and work together for the Zionist cause, then I am afraid we shall be thrown even further from the realisation of the Zionist programme than we were before Herzl first sounded the clarion note of the call to the return to Zion.

VERITAS.

Rabbi Dr. Landau at the Old "Shool."

Shevuoth Sermon.

Rabbi Dr. J. L. Landau preached the following sermon at the President Street Synagogue on Sunday last, the First Day of *Shevuoth*:—

"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God endureth for ever" (Isaiah xl 8, 17, 31.)

My dear Brethren,

In the lands of the Occident the plants which decorate the synagogues on the days of this Festival serve to remind the worshippers of the resurrection in nature. The earth, teeming with new forms of re-awakened life, revives also in their hearts new hopes and stronger feelings of belief. A great Jewish poet compares the flowers of the field to the stars of the sky. And indeed, both remind us of those mysterious forces to which they owe their existence. The whole revelation in nature recalls to our mind the revelation of the divine spirit in history. Is not the Torah, on the one hand, likened unto a tree of life, and on the other, to the sun whose powerful rays call forth the wonderful phenomena of spring?

In this country, however, at this season of the year the plants which decorate our synagogues awaken in us quite different feelings. The fields here are no longer clothed in the velvet green of spring, but in the faded tints of autumn. Even these evergreens will soon lose their freshness and bloom. And they impress upon us the lesson that no mortal being, no child of nature, can resist the onslaught of time.

"All things that we love and cherish
Pass like dreams, we may not
keep,

Human hearts must break and
perish,

Human eyes must fall asleep."

But who of us, who has crested
field and forest in the winter has not

been deeply impressed with the silence and solemnity which emanate from the dormant forces of nature. And who of us has not been profoundly moved with feelings of awe and reverence at the side of an open grave. Both these aspects of death seem to exhort us with a soundless voice. "Out of this decay, out of this process of corruption, there shall arise newer and more vigorous life." The frame may perish, the body may decay and its beauty vanish, but the divine essence remains. "The grass may wither, the flower fade, but the word of the Lord shall endure for ever." And, says our text, not only single individuals, but whole nations, whole generations are also like the flower that fades.

Providence has subjected history to the same eternal laws which govern nature. Both in their development move by the inflexible will of God towards a certain definite aim. Science has conclusively proved that a thousand seeds are destroyed by nature in the process of selection in order to develop one species to greater perfection. According to the same law of selection, thousands of living beings are sacrificed for the purpose of producing one more perfect creature. And what is true of the work of nature is also true of history. The only difference is, that whereas we are still ignorant of the invisible forces which dominate nature we are fully aware of the moving spirit in history, of the various causes and effects which form the links in the chain of generations. The Rabbis therefore maintained that the production of the Torah preceded the creation of the world.

All these reflections force themselves upon us when celebrating this Festival of Revelation, surrounded by these symbols of decaying life. Do they not speak to us most eloquently in the words of our text, "the grass may wither, the flower fade, but the word of God shall endure for ever." More than 2,000 years have passed since the prophet proclaimed that truth, and we, children of the 19th and 20th centuries stand to-day before the historical past as before an immense open grave, the grave of time. It would surpass the power of our imagination were we to think of those hundreds of millions of individuals who have sunk into its baseless depths. But even the thought of the great nations, of the powerful tribes that have been destroyed, that have almost totally vanished leaving behind but faint footprints upon the sands of time—must fill us with that mysterious awe and wonder which seize us at the sight of the shoreless, starlit-ocean above. And yet, all those nations did not live in vain. All those millions of human beings did not enter upon nor disappear from the stage of life without the purpose of Providence. The lives of all of them were devoted to the furtherance of certain ideas, and we Jews firmly believe—to the promotion of the ideas of our Torah.

To-day, critics have arisen who dissect and analyse the Bible, with the intention of disputing its divine origin. There are even Jews who delight to hear that the original value of the Bible has been overestimated,

and that its influence is rapidly waning. But have those same people also taken into consideration all those various, innumerable religious theories which the mighty influence of our Torah, which its irresistible spirit, has swept away? Have they ever considered the fact, that all those powerful enemies of our people who determined to crush that spirit perished, the victims of their futile endeavours. How great, how vital must be the moral force of the Bible that enabled it to outlive ancient nations and their religions. Critics, in order to minimise the value of the books of Moses, quote Plato, Marcus Aurelius and now even Hammurabi, to show that a Grecian philosopher, a Roman Emperor and a Babylonian King also conceived sublime ideas which they transmitted to posterity. But how many know their names, and how many their ideas—and can their teachings even remotely and in any way be compared with the deathless doctrines of our Bible? Is it not most wonderful that the half-civilised native in the extreme outskirts of the Southern hemisphere, as well as the eminent scholar in the centre of European civilisation each in his own way, reverently study the pages of the Book which our forefathers once saved out of the ashes of the Temple? Our Torah is read to-day in the 20th century, in hundreds of languages and is being distributed in millions of copies throughout the inhabited world. Its verses are quoted, interpreted, and taught, from every pulpit, in every place of worship and within the halls of all modern Universities. The Bible Society alone has in the course of one century distributed 186,680,000 copies of our Bible in 378 languages and dialects. Are we, in face of these facts, not fully justified in maintaining that the promise of the prophet has been fulfilled—that "the law goeth forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem"? It is true, we are now living in a civilised world. We have, in a certain sense, outgrown many ideas of ancient times. Even the theories of an Aristotle, who dominated the world of thought for many centuries, have become antiquated. Philosophical systems rise and fall and even scientific systems change with every decade. But the Bible rises victorious from out all these changes, unaffected by the mists of time like the sun above. Have we, the children of this century, already realised its very essentials? Do we keep even the ten commandments, those elementary moral laws essential even for primitive man in the darkest regions of the world? Do all of us understand the very first commandment, "I am the Lord, thy God." Do we realise in our daily life the precious and pregnant doctrine of Providence? About 700 years ago, one of our greatest Rabbis wrote a whole Book upon this first Commandment. Can we to-day honestly say that we understand it as thoroughly as he did?

The process of civilisation in history is even slower than progress in the dominions of nature. The formation of character requires more centuries than the formation of crystals. But individuals and whole generations may perish and wither like the grass, but the will of God and His